

ROBERTS & TILTON

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L.A. Object and David Hammons Body Prints
June 30 - July 28th, 2007

Ed Bereal, Wallace Berman, Nathaniel Bustion, Alonzo Davis, Dale Brockman Davis, Charles Dickson, Mel Edwards, David Hammons, George Herms, Daniel LaRue Johnson, Edward Kienholz, Masud Kordofan, Ron Miyashiro, Senga Nengudi, John Outterbridge, Noah Purifoy, Joe Ray, John Riddle, Roho, Betye Saar, Kenzi Shiokava, Timothy Washington, and La Monte Westmoreland

Roberts & Tilton is pleased to present *LA Object and David Hammons Body Prints*. The exhibition features assemblages by Los Angeles artists of the 1960s and 70s, and early work of the American sculptor David Hammons. This exhibition will showcase a broad overview of the LA assemblage movement of the 1960s and 70s, including the most important West Coast artists often seen as the core of this genre. *LA Object and David Hammons Body Prints* will seek to re-examine works by artists often left out of mainstream gallery and museum historical exhibitions. In particular, it will explore the important role of African American artists within this period.

LA assemblage grew out of the historical context of Dada and Surrealism at a moment when the poetry and underground films of the Beat generation, of which Wallace Berman was a member, were an influential force in California. Walter Hopps had brought important exhibitions of Kurt Schwitters (1962), Marcel Duchamp (1963 - his first comprehensive show in the U.S.), and Joseph Cornell (1966) to the Pasadena Art Museum, where he was director. And MOMA's Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage traveled to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1968. However, the LA art scene of the 60s and 70s was far more removed from the New York art scene, and from what was happening in the rest of the country, than it is now and than it has been since the 1980s when it began to play a more prominent national role. Within the scope of LA art of this period, those who were concerned with assemblage were a distinct group. Partially due to the dispersed nature of the city, culturally as well as geographically, there were separate networks of artists even among those making assemblages. African American, Asian and Chicano artists were often isolated from the gallery and institutional art scene and may be looked at both as part of distinct artistic communities, and in conjunction with the larger movement. This was also the era of civil rights, the 1965 Watts riots, and general social and cultural upheaval.

These events, along with the influential presence of Simon Rodia's Watts Towers, built from 1921 to 1954 out of scrap metal and found objects, had an important impact on the work of African American artists.

As part of this movement, Roberts & Tilton will present a selection of early body prints by David Hammons. Often considered a New York artist, Hammons created his first major body of work, including these unique body prints, from the late 60s to mid-70s while living in Los Angeles. Although his work was often exhibited in Los Angeles, because of the separations among the various art communities, Hammons was seen mostly in the context of African American LA artists, and only after his move to New York did he become internationally known for his assembled sculptures and installations. In his body prints, Hammons created nuanced, ironic and often political commentaries. As in his sculpture and installations, Hammons was always concerned with making work relevant to the African American experience. This mature body of work has rarely been presented within the art historical context from which it arose. We are pleased to exhibit these works alongside those of his contemporaries working within the assemblage movement in Los Angeles.

Panel Discussion

Saturday, July 14, 2009, 4pm

Panelists include artist Dale Brockman Davis, curator Cecil Fergerson, artist John Outterbridge, and others. Moderated by Paul Von Blum, Professor of African American Studies, UCLA

Special thanks to Black Coyote for their support.